

To the Members of the California State Senate:

I am returning Senate Bill 924 without my signature.

All Californians want the safe and swift return of our troops. That said, public opinion polls have confirmed again and again that Californians are sharply divided, as are all Americans, as to when and how our troops should be withdrawn. We do not need an advisory ballot to understand this deep divide.

The decision to engage in or withdraw troops from war is a federal issue, not a state issue. Few decisions are more difficult for Members of Congress and the President. All Californians have the right and the means to speak their mind on matters of such national importance.

In fact, California moved up its presidential primary to February 5th to give California voters a greater voice in selecting their party's presidential candidate. There is no louder message Californians can send to Washington on the Iraq war than who should lead our nation.

Placing a non-binding resolution on Iraq on the same ballot, when it carries no weight or authority, would only further divide voters and shift attention from other critical issues that must be addressed.

For these reasons, I am returning this bill without my signature.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger